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S E R M O N

PREACHED BEFORE THE  
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,

AT ST. MARY'S,

ON WEDNESDAY, FEB. 21, 1781.

BEING

The Day appointed by HIS MAJESTY'S PROCLAMATION, to be  
observed as a Day of FASTING and HUMILIATION.

BY GEORGE HORNE, D.D. K

PRESIDENT OF ST. MARY MAGDALEN COLLEGE,  
AND CHAPLAIN IN ORDINARY TO HIS MAJESTY.

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*Martii 1. 1781.*



## ISAIAH XXVI. 9.

WHEN THY JUDGEMENTS ARE IN THE EARTH,  
THE INHABITANTS OF THE WORLD WILL  
LEARN RIGHTEOUSNESS.

**I**N that part of Ifaiah's Prophecy, which is comprehended between the thirteenth and twenty-third chapters, inclusively, the fate of several cities and countries is denounced. Stationed for the purpose, by divine command, in his watch-tower on mount Sion, and from thence casting his eye over the different states and empires in that part of the globe, the prophet is made to behold, in vision, the judgments of the Almighty prepared for them. He sees the mighty tempest sailing, in an awful manner, around the horizon, and falling successively, as the transgressions of each called it down, on Babylon, Philistia, Moab, Damascus, Egypt, and Tyre. At length, as there is no respect of persons with God, he perceives the storm approaching Judea itself, and

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the whole weight of the divine displeasure impending on the chosen people, for their wickedness and apostacy. The desolation induced thereby on the holy land makes the subject of the twenty-fourth chapter, where it is described with a sublimity of sentiment and expression peculiar to the Sacred Writings. There is no need to detain you by a minute enquiry into the particular period supposed to be intended. Isaiah, as his learned translator and expositor has very justly observed, chiefly employs general images; such as set forth the greatness and universality of the ruin that was to be brought upon the country by these great revolutions, involving all orders and degrees of men, changing entirely the face of things, and destroying the whole polity both religious and civil; yet with intimations of a remnant to be saved, and a restoration to be at length effected, by a glorious establishment of the kingdom of God.—Having thus viewed this extensive and interesting scene in all its parts and all its consequences, he breaks forth, in the twenty-fifth chapter, into a song of praise, in which his mind seems to be more possessed with the prospect of future mercies, than with the recollection of the past. The heavenly strain is resumed in the twenty-sixth chapter, from whence the text is taken.

A CHORUS



A CHORUS of the faithful is introduced, ascribing to God the glory of protecting them from their enemies ; “ We have a strong city ; salvation shall he  
 “ establish for walls and bulwarks.” A procession is seen, advancing towards the temple, of such whose fidelity had been experienced in the day of public calamity ; and the ministers there attending are commanded to give them an entrance into those sacred mansions of rest and peace. “ Open ye the gates,  
 “ and let the righteous nation enter ; constant in the  
 “ truth, stayed in mind, thou shalt preserve them  
 “ in perpetual peace, because they have trusted in  
 “ thee.” From this example, an exhortation is addressed to the weak and the wavering, the timid and desponding, to repose their confidence in Him, who can bruise the strongest enemy under the feet of his people ; “ Trust ye in Jehovah for ever ; for in the  
 “ Lord Jehovah is never failing protection. For he  
 “ hath humbled those that dwell on high ; the lofty  
 “ city he hath brought her down : he hath brought  
 “ her down to the ground, he hath levelled her with  
 “ the dust. The foot shall trample upon her ; the  
 “ feet of the poor, the steps of the needy.” A question might be asked, why the good should suffer with the bad ? Answer is returned, that nothing can befall *them*, which is not proportioned to their case, and



calculated for their final benefit; "The way of the  
 " righteous is perfectly strait; thou most exactly le-  
 " velest the path of the righteous<sup>a</sup>." The confes-  
 sors, thus persuaded of the wisdom and equity of  
 God's proceedings, go on to describe in what manner  
 and with what affections they received his chastise-  
 ments, passing the calm and silent hours of the night,  
 and the dawn of the morning, in devout meditation  
 and prayer, and waiting patiently till the divine  
 judgements should produce their proper effect, in  
 reclaiming and reforming those who were the objects  
 of them: "Even in the way of thy laws, O Je-  
 " hovah, we have placed our confidence in thy  
 " name; and in the remembrance of thee is the de-  
 " fire of our soul. With my soul have I desired  
 " thee in the night; yea, with my inmost spirit in  
 " the morn have I sought thee. For when thy  
 " judgements are in the earth, the inhabitants of  
 " the world learn righteousness<sup>b</sup>."

GIVE me leave to offer a few reflections, suitable  
 to the present occasion, on the Teacher, the School,

<sup>a</sup> See VITRINGA.

<sup>b</sup> The preceding citations are made from the Bishop of LONDON's translation, as expressing the sense of the original with greater force and precision.

and



and the Lesson. The Teacher is God ; the School, that of AFFLICTION; the Lesson, RIGHTEOUSNESS.

I. WHEN from these happy and sequestered seats we look abroad, and acquaint ourselves with what is now passing around us, a real scene presents itself, resembling that visionary one exhibited to Isaiah. The rage of man seems to be contending with that of the winds and waves, which shall produce the greatest degree of misery upon the earth: we hear the wailings of afflicted islands, and the cries of nations in distress. Aghast, amidst so much havoc and devastation, the mind shrinks back upon itself, and asks, anxiously asks, from whence proceeds such variety of wretchedness? Whose hand imposes this load of woe upon the human race? We must reply, in the prophetic language, it is "the *burden* of the " Lord," who governs the world which he created.

THE primary design of these solemnities is to direct our thoughts, amidst the changes of this mortal life, to the superintending Providence of Him, who ordereth all things aright in heaven and earth. Destitute of this instructive and comfortable consideration, we might suppose the universe to be under the uncontrollable influence of fiends and furies, sport-  
ing



ing themselves with the calamities of mankind ; or we might deify chance, committing the affairs of it to the blindest of guides, instead of that one all-powerful divine intelligence, which in the same undivided instant both sees and hears all things. We might imagine worlds to have been propagated in succession, like vegetables, whose seed is in themselves ; or, like animals, *ab Ovo* \*. We might fancy the evil principle to have been coeternal with, and independent on the good one. We might argue from the attributes of God against the reality of evil, or from the prevalence of evil against the existence of God.

BUT the fact is, we cannot reasonably doubt the existence of either. For the existence of God, the argument from the effect to the cause, or from the

\* “ In like manner as a tree sheds it's seed into the neighbouring fields, and produces other trees ; so the great vegetable, the world, or this planetary system, produces within itself certain seeds, which being scattered into the surrounding chaos, vegetate into new worlds. A comet, for instance, is the seed of a world ; and after it has been fully ripened, by passing from sun to sun, and star to star, it is at last tossed into the unformed elements which every where surround this universe, and immediately sprouts up into a new system.—Or if, for the sake of variety (for I see no other advantage) we should suppose this world to be an animal ; a comet is the egg of this animal : and in like manner as an ostrich lays it's egg in the sand, which, without any farther care, hatches the egg, and produces a new animal ; so . . . . .” *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*, p. 132.

work



work to the workmaster, though much labour has been employed in a posthumous volume to perplex and confound it, stands firm and irrefragable ; nor can the incompetence of the human understanding (limited as it is in it's views of created nature) to judge of the use and expedience of some of the parts, ever be admitted by us, while we continue in our senses, as a proof that God did not make the whole. Eternal reason, surely, spoke by the mouth of the apostle, when he said, " Every house is " builded by some man ; but he that built all things " is God <sup>d</sup>." When we see an edifice, calculated to answer various purposes, and carrying in it all the marks of thought and design, we know it could not have built itself. The senseless materials could never have prepared and arranged themselves in such order. The timber could not have moved, cut and squared, out of the forest ; nor could the marble have advanced to meet it, hewn and polished, from the quarry. We conclude therefore that the house must have had a builder : and we apply the argument, *a fortiori*, to the case of the world, and it's Maker, God ; the marks of thought and design being here infinitely more and greater. Tully scruples not to assert, that he who denies his assent to it does not deserve the

<sup>d</sup> Heb. iii. 4.



name of a *man*. Yet, in this learned and intelligent age, have we seen a writer, who deemed himself the deliverer of mankind from the bondage of superstition, and the light of the nations, endeavouring to doubt and dispute it away, by an application of the favourite topic, so thoroughly baffled, some years ago, in the case of miracles. “ Will any man (says “ he) tell me, with a serious countenance, that an “ orderly Universe must arise from some thought “ and art like the human, because we have *expe-* “ *rience* of it? To ascertain this reasoning, it were “ requisite that we had *experience* of the origin of “ worlds “.” His own words are cited, because otherwise you could hardly perhaps have imagined it possible, that a philosopher should argue, “ with a “ serious countenance,” against creation, from the circumstance of his not having been present when it was effected, and because it is an event which does not happen every day. We are not to be induced, by such reasoning, to question the existence of God.

As little can we question the existence of *evil*. For why are we assembled in this place, at this time? Alas, we hear of it, we see it, we feel it, daily and hourly. But as the deist will not believe

\* Dialogues concerning Natural Religion, p. 65.



in the Scriptures, so the atheist will not believe in the being of a God, till every difficulty can be solved—Verily, then, each must die in his unbelief. They should believe, upon sufficient evidence, and trust their Maker for the rest. The atheist cannot reconcile the notion of a God with the existence of evil. But there is sufficient evidence for the existence of both. Here let us rest. God had his reasons for permitting evil, or he would not have permitted it. If he hath been pleased to discover them in his word, or if we can discover them by a view of things compared with that word, it is well. If not, still, reasons there are; and what we cannot know now, we shall know hereafter. In the mean time, let it be repeated—God had his reasons for permitting evil; otherwise, he would not have permitted it—The whole compass of science does not furnish a sounder conclusion, resting on more substantial premises. Here fix your foot, and you sweep away at a stroke all the flimsy sophisms fabricated in the school of Epicurus, to entangle and distress you on *this* part of the subject—No; in all our sufferings, national as well as personal, whether proceeding from our enemies, from the elements, or from ourselves, we are to acknowledge the hand of heaven. The whole tenor of Scripture addresseth a community, upon

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such



such an occasion, as our church doth an individual, labouring under disease and infirmity. “ Know this, “ that Almighty God is the Lord of life and death, “ and of all things to them pertaining, as youth, “ strength, health, age, weakness, or sickness. Where- “ fore, whatsoever your sickness is, know you cer- “ tainly, that it is God’s visitation.” Philosophy shews us, there are second causes, physical and moral; and the more philosophy can explain of their nature, properties, and manner of agency, the better; success attend her labours! But religion assures us, that as they exist by the power, so they act under the direction and controul of the First.

WHY, then, often find we in ourselves (for we often do find in ourselves) a certain shyness and backwardness in making this acknowledgement? There is a vulgar and canting way of making it, which is disgusting enough, and incurs the suspicion of hypocrisy; but still, in sobriety and seriousness, upon proper occasions, it ought to be made. Is there not a deficiency of *faith* in the case? “ Ye have heard “ of the *patience* of Job:” consider likewise the operation of his *faith*. The Sabeans and Chaldeans despoil him of part of his property; the lightening consumes more of it; and an hurricane from the wilderness



derness buries his children under the ruins of the house, where they were feasting together. But what says he? He mentions none of them—"The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away<sup>f</sup>."

THERE may be another reason. To acknowledge punishment, is to confess guilt. In owning the judgements of God to be upon us, we own that we have made him our enemy; and as the reflection is disagreeable, we fondly endeavour to persuade ourselves, that our sufferings are owing to *some* other cause—to *any* other cause. But the just and prudent inference should run thus. Have we made him our enemy? Let us lose no time in making him our friend; since, when we are rolling onward to the brink of the precipice, our fall will not be prevented by shutting our eyes. Let us add to our faith humility, and honestly confess ourselves to be--what God knows we are. This leads us to the

II<sup>a</sup> Consideration proposed, namely, the School in which God is teaching us, that of AFFLICTION.

BUT why the School of Affliction? Is there no other School, in which we may be taught? Does

<sup>f</sup> Job i. 21.



God delight in the sufferings of men? Certainly not. We have his own gracious word to assure us, that “he does not afflict *willingly*.” He proceeds to do it, like a tender and affectionate parent, with reluctance. “How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? “How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I “make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as “Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me, my re-  
“pentings are kindled together.” — Can the force of words go farther?

THERE is another School, in which we once were placed, under the tuition of mercy, and drawn by the cords of a man, that the *goodness* of God might lead us to repentance. But if prosperity does not encourage us to be virtuous, adversity must compel us to be so. If we become not sensible of heaven’s blessings by the enjoyment of them, we must be made sensible by the loss. Foolishness is sometimes bound in the heart of a nation, as well as that of a child, and the rod of correction must drive it out.<sup>1</sup> “Misery and sin (says a great writer of the present  
“age) were produced together. The depravation  
“of human will was followed by a disorder of the  
“harmony of nature; and by that Providence,

<sup>2</sup> Lam. iii. 33.

<sup>3</sup> Hos. xi. 8.

<sup>1</sup> Prov. xxii. 15.

which



“ which often places antidotes in the neighbourhood  
 “ of poisons, vice was checked by misery, lest it  
 “ should swell to universal and unlimited dominion.”  
 In a word, physical evil was ordained to be the punishment of moral.

BUT this punishment is seldom inflicted, without previous notice. Watchmen are generally sent to sound an alarm, and faithful witnesses are raised up, by their writings and by their conduct to bear their testimony. Indeed, the Word of God is a standing admonition to ages and generations, not only by precepts, threats, and promises, instructing, rebuking, and exhorting, but in the historical and prophetic parts of it exhibiting a variety of cases and precedents, among which any nation, at any period of its existence, may, upon searching, meet with one applicable to its own state. So that whatever calamity befalls us, the Holy Book, if we will but look into it, may be found reproving us, as St. Paul reproved the mariners in the ship; “ Sirs, ye should have  
 “ hearkened to me, and ye would not have suffered  
 “ this harm and loss<sup>k</sup>.”

THE first chastisements are of a mild and gentle

<sup>k</sup> Acts xxvii. 21.



nature, as it were whispering repentance and reformation in our ears. To generous and well-nurtured spirits the slightest appearances of displeasure are sufficient. When the heart is hardened, more rigorous measures must be taken, and heavier punishments brought forward. Majestic, and tremendous, God arises to judgement. The sound of his thunder is heard at a distance, and all the prognostics appear of an approaching storm.

DIVINE justice, though sure, is slow ; and now, as of old, the long-suffering of God waits with so much patience and forbearance, that as in the life of man there is a certain part, when, for some years together, perceiving little or no alteration in himself and those about him, he almost disbelieves, at least he seems willing to forget, that he shall grow old and die ; so by the firm establishment and long subsistence of a nation, remaining nearly the same, through the repeated vicissitudes of peace and war, we are tempted to exclaim, “ Where is the threat of  
“ his coming ? For all things continue as they  
“ were<sup>1</sup>.” But let us not so deceive ourselves. The nation, as well as the man, is verging apace to that period of life, which is to be labour and sorrow :

<sup>1</sup> 2 Pet. 111. 4.



the motion, however gradual and imperceptible for some time, will be dreadfully accelerated in it's latter stages ; and perhaps, after incessant warnings and admonitions, the grim spectre will suddenly appear in all his terrors, at an hour when we look not for him.

IN these particular judgements, as in that last and general one, " God hath appointed a day <sup>m</sup>." And although he hath reserved such appointments in his own power, yet are there symptoms of the disorder coming to a crisis, certain " signs of the times," by which they who are conversant in the Scriptures, and the history of declining empires, may form shrewd conjectures, partly from the *moral*, and partly from the *political* situation of a people.

NATIONAL, like personal depravity, is progressive, and, at a stated time, attains to maturity—in the language of Holy Writ, it is FULL ; when a voice issues from the throne, " Put in the sickle, for " the harvest is ripe ; the wickedness is great <sup>n</sup>."

THE wickedness of a country may be styled *great*, when it has abolished the old, virtuous, manly, national character, and introduced one of an opposite

<sup>m</sup> Acts xvii. 31.

<sup>n</sup> Joel iii. 13.

complexion,



complexion, having established its dominion by fashion, and ruling with an high hand over all orders and degrees, no longer subject to fear or shame, but becoming matter to itself either of glory, or of mirth; trampling under foot, and spurning at the very name of that discipline, which should check and reform it; according to those most significant and ever memorable words of the Roman historian, containing in them the substance of a volume. “ Ad illa mihi  
 “ se quisque acriter intendat animum, quæ vita, qui  
 “ mores fuerint: per quos viros, quibusque artibus,  
 “ et partum et auctum imperium sit. Labente deinde  
 “ paullatim disciplinâ, velut defidentes primo mores  
 “ sequatur animo: deinde ut magis magisque lapsi  
 “ sint; tum ire cœperint præcipites; donec ad hæc  
 “ tempora, quibus nec VITIA nostra, nec REMEDIA  
 “ pati possumus, perventum est.”

WHEN dissipation and immorality reign triumphant in a Christian country, they will soon discard those principles by which they feel themselves condemned, and adopt the system of infidelity. Revelation, after having been for a while “ holden captive in un-  
 “ righteousness,” disarmed and disabled by heretical and false glosses, will at length be openly de-

\* Liv. Præfat.

† Rom. i. 18.



nied and rejected—like Him who dared to thwart the pleasures of Herodias—first imprisoned, and then beheaded.

JOSEPHUS gives the following account of his unhappy countrymen, at the time immediately preceding their final destruction. “ That time, says he, “ abounded in all manner of iniquity, so that none “ was left unperpetrated. Yea, though a man should “ have endeavoured to invent some new species of it, “ yet could he have fallen upon none, that was not “ then in vogue<sup>1</sup>.” Thus much for *practice*—Now for *faith*—“ It was familiar with them, to make a jest of “ divine things, and to deride, as so many senseless “ tales, and juggling impostures, the sacred oracles “ of their prophets, though then fulfilling before “ their eyes, and upon themselves’.” The chair of the scorner, probably, was regularly taken, and portions of the Word of God tossed about upon the tongues of prophaneness and impurity, as a Sabbath-evening employment, for the diversion of the rabble.—After such an account, we naturally expect to hear of the event which soon followed—The carcase was thrown out, and the eagles flew to their prey.

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. de Bell. Jud. Lib. vii. Cap. 8. Edit. Hudson.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. Lib. iv. Cap. 6.



FROM the *political* state of a nation, common sense, as well as the experience of past ages, forbids us to augurate favourably, when having been drained of it's treasures by a long series of expensive and ruinous wars, it is, in consequence, oppressed by an accumulated and enormous load of debt; the very interest of which is with difficulty discharged, by all the variety of taxes and imposts, that ability and ingenuity can devise: when the body is grown too large and extensive for the head to govern; and the distant provinces, revolting, occasion, for the purpose of reducing them, a war still more expensive and ruinous than any of the former: when the ancient and avowed enemies of such a country, taking advantage of it's situation, combine their forces to support the rebellion against it, aiming to extinguish it's glory, the subject of their admiration, and to appropriate it's commerce, the object of their envy; while of the surrounding nations, some stand unconcerned spectators, or perhaps look towards a share of the spoil, and others, even it's oldest friends and allies, after having for some time secretly assisted, at length openly join the confederacy: when the war becomes one of procrastination and finance, each endeavouring to exhaust the resources of the other, so that the conqueror will probably fall breathless on the  
the



the body of his antagonist : when, instead of unity and unanimity at home, the counsels and operations of a government, in these perilous circumstances, are clogged and impeded by everlasting contests for places of power and emolument ; so that apprehensions arise, where there should least of all be the appearance of any ground for them, that the public interest has been sacrificed to that of a party : when through the prevalence of licentious tenets, for many years with unwearied pains disseminated, and now producing their proper fruits, in an impatience of all law and restraint, discontents, divisions, and searchings of heart abound, ready, at every opportunity, to break forth into tumult and confusion ; as it happened to the wretched Jerusalem, that while the Roman armies were applying the instruments of destruction, in every direction, from without, a faction of Zealots within set fire to the City and the Temple.

If the foregoing particulars shall be judged applicable, in any degree, to ourselves, and you shall be of opinion, that the Almighty is indeed thus teaching Us in the School of Affliction at this time, you will deem it neither inexpedient, nor unseasonable, to consider



III. THE Lesson designed to be taught, under this severe course of discipline.

THE representation given above has been given, not to produce despondency, but to rouse attention; not to discourage, but only to alarm. If a nation sleep, it must be awakened. It were cruel, in such circumstances, to be afraid of *disturbing* it. Affliction will not have wrought the effect intended, till we shall awake to RIGHTEOUSNESS, and learn, in this our day, the things which belong to our peace and welfare. If the sense of danger be not quick, the efforts to escape it will be ineffectual.

THAT it *may* be escaped, we have no reason to doubt. For though the appointment of a general and eternal judgement be absolute, the time fixed for these partial and temporal visitations is always conditional. — “ Yet forty days, and Niniveh shall “ be overthrown ;” cried a true Prophet, at the command of his God, in the streets of that great and wicked city. But, at the voice of the Prophet, Niniveh repented, and subsisted more than three times forty years afterwards. It is indeed a rule in the divine proceedings, “ At what instant I shall speak

\* Jonah III. 4.

“ concerning



“ concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom,  
 “ to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it;  
 “ if that nation, against whom I have pronounced,  
 “ turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil  
 “ that I thought to do unto them’.” By repent-  
 ance, through faith in our Redeemer, we disarm the  
 wrath of God, because we cease to be any longer  
 the objects against which it is levelled. Should we  
 continue finally impenitent, like those mentioned by  
 Isaiah in the verse following the text, who, “ when  
 “ the arm of Jehovah is lifted up, will not see,”  
 then must we be destroyed, that other nations, ad-  
 monished by our example, may be the more afraid  
 to offend. But if we ourselves *take* the warning  
 which otherwise we shall *give*, then will the great  
 end of Providence in sending these calamities upon  
 us be answered. We shall be reformed, we shall be  
 pardoned, we shall be spared. We shall leave our  
 dross and scum behind, and come forth out of the  
 fire, bright and burnished.

PHYSICAL evil, by being made the punishment  
 of moral evil, becomes the cause of moral good.  
 And, as things are now constituted since the Fall,  
 perhaps there is a very small portion only of moral

’ Jer. xviii. 7, 8.



good among men, which does not owe it's origin to this very cause. " If pleasure were not followed by pain, who would forbear it? If the inconvenience of suffering wrong were not greater than the satisfaction of doing it, when would mankind have submitted to the restraint of laws? Were it not for a consciousness of being liable to suffer the miseries we relieve, how would charity wax cold? And how few would fix their attention upon the future, if they were not discontented with the present? In a world like ours, where our senses assault us, and our hearts betray us, we should pass on from crime to crime, heedless and remorseless, if misery did not stand in our way, and our own pains admonish us of our folly." These are, in substance, the observations of the same great writer, to whom I have before alluded, who is so well known, that he need not be named. And most valuable observations they are. They reconcile the mind to suffering evil, and unfold the mysteries of that divine chymistry, by which good may be extracted from it. I cannot forbear reciting from the same place the following just and beautiful description of the whole process of this matter in an *individual*, from youth to age, which, in passing, you will be pleased to apply, for yourselves,



yourselves, to the case of a *nation*. And may the issue, with respect to our own, be the same !

“ In childhood, while our minds are yet unoccu-  
 “ pied, Religion is impressed upon them, and the  
 “ first years of almost all who have been well educa-  
 “ ted, are passed in a regular discharge of the duties of  
 “ piety. But as we advance forward into the crowds  
 “ of life, innumerable delights solicit our inclina-  
 “ tions, and innumerable cares distract our attention.  
 “ The time of youth is passed in noisy frolics ;  
 “ manhood is led on from hope to hope, and from  
 “ project to project. The dissoluteness of pleasure,  
 “ the inebriation of success, the ardour of expecta-  
 “ tion, and the vehemence of competition, chain  
 “ down the mind alike to the present scene ; nor is  
 “ it remembered how soon this mist of trifles must  
 “ be scattered, and the bubbles which float upon the  
 “ rivulet of life be lost for ever in the gulph of eter-  
 “ nity. To this consideration scarce any man is  
 “ awakened, but by some pressing and resistless Evil.  
 “ The death of those from whom he derived his  
 “ pleasures, or to whom he destined his possessions,  
 “ some disease which shews him the vanity of all  
 “ external acquisitions, or the gloom of age which  
 “ intercepts his prospects of long enjoyment, forces  
 “ him



“ him to fix his hopes upon another state; and when  
 “ he has contended with the tempests of life till his  
 “ strength fails him, he flies at last to the shelter of  
 “ Religion ”.”

LATE therefore though it be, let us yet apply our hearts unto wisdom. Had it been done sooner, it might have been done in a way more agreeable, and more to our credit. But let us neglect to do it no longer. The instruction, which we have failed to reap from benefits conferred, let us, however, reap from calamities inflicted, and not subject ourselves to the reproach uttered formerly by the Apostle to his Galatians; “ Have ye suffered so many things in  
 “ vain?—If it be yet in vain ”.”

It is not the business of the day to call our governors to account, but ourselves; to censure their measures, but our own. There is enough to correct and reform, at home. At least, let us begin there. We shall have no leisure, for some time, to look abroad. “ When thou art converted, strengthen  
 “ thy brethren \* :” but be not curious to find fault

\* See the paper in the IDLER, entitled, *Physical evil moral good*. Vol. II. p. 206.

\* Gal. III. 4.

\* Luke XXII. 32.

with



with others, and careless to amend thyself. Enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, let the most concerning question be the leading one —“ Lord, is it I ?”

MATTERS of mere science often terminate, as they begin, in speculation. But Righteousness is an *art*, and must be acquired, like other arts, by practice, by use, by habit. ~~It resembles a lesson in music, which is to be learned indeed by the book ; but no man is reputed to have learned it, till he can readily take it from thence, and perform it on the instrument.~~ “ He that DOETH Righteousness is righteous<sup>2</sup>. ”

It consisteth not solely in going through the services of this day ; in acts of mourning and humiliation. They are preparatives, and excellent ones ; but they are no more. To what purpose confession of sin, if sin be not forsaken ? What avail incitements to conversion, if conversion do not follow upon them ? Why submit to medicine, if we intend to continue in those irregularities, which first caused, and will ever perpetuate the disorder ? Alas, it is labour lost — it is an aggravation of our crime — it is

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxvi. 22.

<sup>2</sup> 1 John iii. 7.



mockery — “ it is iniquity — even THIS solemn  
“ meeting <sup>a</sup>.”

To conclude — Righteousness is not partial ; it is not limited to this virtue, or that person in a community, but extends to all the possible duties of all men in every station. The chastisements of God (as a learned and pious prelate of the last century well remarks) “ have a general aim. It is not their design, that we should quit one ill course to pursue another ; that we should abhor idols, and commit sacrilege ; fly from superstition, and run into prophaneness ; cry out of oppression, and bring in confusion ; suppress Popery, to encourage schism and faction ? From universal reformation we may expect universal deliverance <sup>b</sup>.” The effect of such Righteousness will be PEACE ; to procure the re-establishment of which among Christian nations, do these judgements of the Almighty, now in the world, address themselves to it's inhabitants of all ranks, ages, and conditions, high and low, rich and poor, young and old, clergy and laity.

<sup>a</sup> Isaiah i. 13.

<sup>b</sup> See a Sermon of Bishop BROWNRIG, Vol. II. p. 172. from whence some of the sentiments in this Discourse were taken.

BUT



BUT chiefly, to you, O ye PRINCES, do they call, and their voice is to you that are judges of the earth, deputed by the sovereign of the universe to rule his people in the integrity of your hearts, and guide them by the skilfulness of your hands. View the state of Christendom, often becoming, for years together, the theatre on which your subjects are sent forth, thousands after thousands, to inflict and suffer, in their turns, the manifold calamities of war. Tell it not in the realms of Hindostan; publish it not in the streets of Constantinople; make it not known in the new discovered islands of the distant sea; lest infidels triumph, and savages laugh us to scorn. Hearken what the Lord God speaks concerning you. He speaks to you out of the whirlwind, in a very audible manner. While you are endeavouring to destroy each other, the fury of the elements, resembling the last convulsions of departing nature, desolates the choicest possessions of you all. In one part of the picture appear blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke; in the other, the heavens are in confusion, and the foundations of the earth shake.—If there be any fear of God, by whom ye reign; if there be any consolation in Christ, by whose name ye are called; if there be any bowels of love and mercy; pity the miseries  
of



of poor mankind, and wipe the tear from the eye of sorrow ; agree to let the horrid scene be closed, and restore joy and comfort to a lamenting world. Millions now on earth shall break forth in your praise, and generations yet unborn shall call you blessed.



